UNITED NATIONS

ST

Secretariat

ST/IC/1992/12
26 February 1992

INFORMATION CIRCULAR

To: Members of the staff

From: The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management

Subject: REVIEW OF DEPENDENCY STATUS AND NEW QUESTIONNAIRE*

1. All staff members on the Headquarters payroll, other than short-term staff, were required until 1991 to complete the annual status report and request for payment of dependency benefits (form P.84). Since current data on staff members and their recognized dependants have been computerized, it was found necessary to modify the status report form and request from the staff at large only such information as needed to update the data.

2. For that purpose, and to simplify the review of the dependency status of staff members, a new questionnaire has been designed which is found on the back of the present circular. Each staff member, whether or not he/she has dependants, must complete sections I and VI of the questionnaire. Those in receipt of dependency benefits must complete the other relevant sections. Failure to comply with this requirement will result in the automatic discontinuance of benefits.

3. Staff members who receive a post adjustment or a monthly mission allowance must complete section V of the questionnaire concerning housing assistance information (see paras. 22 and 23 below).

4. Executive and administrative officers will be responsible for distributing this circular to each of their staff members and returning only the questionnaire part, duly completed and signed, to the Allowances and Benefits Unit by 1 May 1992.

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* Personnel Manual index No. 3340.

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5. Staff members are responsible under the Staff Rules for promptly notifying the Secretary-General in writing of any changes in their marital or dependency status. Notification of changes which occur after the questionnaire has been returned to the executive or administrative officer and which could not have been foreseen at the time should be made in writing to the Allowances and Benefits Unit, Office of Human Resources Management, room S-2550.

Dependent spouse

6. A dependent spouse of a staff member as defined in staff rule 103.24 (a) is one who has no occupational earnings or whose gross occupational earnings do not exceed the earnings limit established for this purpose in rule 103.24. This earnings limit is the gross salary of the lowest entry level of the General Service salary scale applicable at the spouse's place of work. In addition, in the case of a spouse of a staff member in the Professional category and above, the spouse's occupational earnings may not exceed the gross salary of G-2, step 1, for New York, for recognition as a dependent spouse.

7. For New York, the earnings limit for 1991 was $24,538 gross per year, and for 1992 it is $25,578 gross per year (the gross salary in effect on 1 January of the year concerned for a staff member at G-2, step 1). For other duty stations, the earnings limit is equivalent to the lowest entry level of the United Nations General Service salary scales, effective 1 January 1991 or 1992, as appropriate, for the duty station concerned.

8. Staff in the General Service and related categories will receive for a dependent spouse the spouse allowance established for the duty station. Staff in the Professional category and above and in the Field Service category will receive a dependency benefit in the form of salary and post adjustment at the dependency rates. The amount of this benefit is the difference between salary and post adjustment at the single rates and salary and post adjustment at the dependency rates.

9. When the spouse's occupational earnings exceed the established earnings limit, no dependency benefit (spouse allowance or dependency rates of salary and post adjustment) will be paid in his/her respect. However, an adjusted dependency benefit may be paid when the spouse's gross occupational earnings are less than the sum of the earnings limit and the appropriate dependency benefit. The adjustment benefit will be equal to the amount by which the sum of the earnings limit and the appropriate dependency benefit exceeds the spouse's gross occupational earnings.

10. In accordance with paragraph 5 above, it is the staff member's responsibility to report promptly any change in the occupational earnings of his/her spouse, which may affect his/her dependency status. In cases where the staff member was paid a dependency benefit and where his/her spouse received occupational earnings in 1991, proof of earnings such as the W-2 form or copy of the tax return should be attached to the questionnaire before it is

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returned to the executive or administrative officer. Where a dependency benefit was paid in respect of a spouse on the basis of estimated occupational earnings for 1991 but the actual occupational earnings during that year were in excess of the established level, the overpayment will be recovered from the staff member's salary. Conversely, where a dependency benefit was not paid because the estimated earnings exceeded the established level but the actual earnings were below that level, such benefit will be paid to the staff member retroactively.

11. Staff members wishing to claim the spouse allowance for the first time or to have the benefit reinstated, if earnings for 1991 or estimated earnings for 1992 are below the limits specified in paragraph 7 above, should submit a request in writing for the attention of the Allowances and Benefits Unit, to be returned together with the completed questionnaire to their executive or administrative officer by the prescribed deadline.

Dependent children

12. As defined in staff rule 103.24 (b) and paragraph 3 of administrative instruction ST/AI/278/Rev.1 on the definition of dependency status, the following children may be eligible for dependency status:

(a) A staff member's natural child;

(b) A staff member's legally adopted child;

(c) A staff member's stepchild, if residing with the staff member;

(d) If legal adoption of the child is not possible because there is no statutory provision for adoption or any prescribed court procedure for formal recognition of customary or de facto adoption in the staff member's home country or country of permanent residence, then a child in respect of whom the following conditions are met:

(i) The child resides with the staff member;

(ii) The staff member can be regarded as having established a parental relationship with the child;

(iii) The child is not a brother or sister of the staff member;

(iv) The number of children for which dependency benefits are being claimed by the staff member under this subparagraph does not exceed three.

13. For any of the above-mentioned children to be recognized as a staff member's dependent child, the following requirements must be met:

(a) (i) The child must be under the age of 18 years;

(ii) If the child is 18 years or older but under the age of 21 years, he/she must be in full-time attendance at a school or university (or similar institution);

(b) The staff member must provide main and continuing support for the child.

The age and school attendance requirements indicated under (a) above will be waived if a child is physically or mentally incapacitated for substantial gainful employment, either permanently or for a period expected to be of long duration.

14. A children's allowance is payable for each dependent child of a staff member. In the case of staff in the General Service and related categories, the amount of the children's allowance is established for each duty station. In the case of staff in the Professional category and above and in the Field Service category, the amount of the children's allowance is that established in staff regulation 3.4. However, in the case of a staff member in the Professional category and above or in the Field Service category who has no dependent spouse, the staff member will receive for the first child, in lieu of the children's allowance, the dependency rates of salary and post adjustment. This benefit is granted subject to paragraph 15 below.

15. For payment of a dependency benefit in respect of a child in the form of salary and post adjustment at the dependency rates staff rules 103.7 (b) (i) and 103.17 (b) (ii) require that the staff member provide substantial and continuing support for one or more of his/her children. For the provision of such support to be recognized, the sum of the staff member's (a) gross salary less the difference between the single and dependency rates of net salary and (b) post adjustment at the single rate must not be less than two thirds of the gross occupational earnings of his/her spouse. If this requirement is not met, the staff member will receive salary and post adjustment at the single rate and dependency allowance for the child.

16. If a staff member or his/her spouse receives a dependency benefit in the form of a government grant in respect of a child, the amount is subtracted from any dependency benefit payable by the United Nations in respect of that child. The amount of any such grant received in respect of each child should be indicated in section III of the questionnaire.

17. It is the staff member's responsibility to give written notice to the Allowances and Benefits Unit if his/her child marries. If the staff member continues to claim the child as a dependant, documentary evidence satisfactory to the Secretary-General is required under paragraph 19 below for the child to continue to be recognized as his/her dependant.

18. It is also the staff member's responsibility to give written notice to the Allowances and Benefits Unit if his/her child ceases to be in full-time attendance at an educational institution. The staff member is required to submit a certificate of school attendance for his/her dependent child between

the ages of 18 and 21 at the end of each school year, even if the staff member does not receive an education grant. While an effort will be made to remind staff members of this obligation, failure to submit the school certificate will result in discontinuance of the dependency benefits and in recovery of any overpayment. The dependency status of a child between the ages of 18 and 21 continues through a period of vacation only if the child enrols for full-time attendance after the vacation. Otherwise, the dependency status ceases as of the last day of attendance of the preceding school term.

19. In addition to the staff member's certification that he/she provides main and continuing support, documentary evidence of such support satisfactory to the Secretary-General will always be required if a child:

(a) Does not reside with the staff member because of divorce or legal separation;

(b) Is married;

(c) Is regarded as a dependent child under paragraph 3 (d) of administrative instruction ST/AI/278/Rev.1.

Secondary dependant

20. A dependency allowance is payable in respect of only one secondary dependant. It is not payable for a secondary dependant if the staff member is already receiving dependency benefits in respect of a dependent spouse. A secondary dependant may be the father, mother, brother or sister of the staff member of whose financial support the staff member provides one half or more, and, in any case, at least twice the amount of the dependency allowance. In the case of a brother or sister, he/she must be under the age of 18 or, if in full-time attendance at a school or university (or similar educational institution), under the age of 21. However, if the brother or sister is either physically or mentally incapacitated for substantial gainful employment, either permanently or for a period expected to be of long duration, the requirements as to age and school attendance will be waived.

21. Initial claims for a secondary dependant benefit that fulfil the requirements of paragraph 20 above must be submitted in writing for the attention of the Allowances and Benefits Unit, to be returned together with the completed questionnaire to their executive or administrative officer by the prescribed deadline.

Housing assistance

22. Rental deductions will be effected when staff members receive housing assistance including housing provided by the Organization, by a Government, or by a related institution free of charge or at rents substantially lower than the average rents used in calculating the post adjustment index for the duty station. The purpose of these deductions is to maintain equity in the application of the post adjustment system among staff members of the duty station.

23. For those in receipt of a subsidy, it has already been determined that their rented accommodations are of a reasonable standard but that they cost significantly more than the average for their duty station thereby entitling them to a subsidy to alleviate the hardship.

Designation of beneficiary

24. Staff members are required under staff rule 112.5 to notify the Secretary-General of any revocations or changes of beneficiaries. A beneficiary for the purposes of the rule is designated at the time of appointment on the "Designation, change or revocation of beneficiary" form (P.2 [10.83]). Staff members, particularly those who made the designation at the time of their appointment many years ago, are urged to review through their personnel officer whether their original designation is still correct and to make any changes thereto if they wish.

25. It is also suggested that staff members take this opportunity to examine their original designation of beneficiaries for the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund and for the Group Life Insurance Plan. Notification of changes should be sent to the Secretary of the Pension Fund, room S-765, or to the Insurance Section, room S-2755, as appropriate.

QUESTIONNAIRE ON DEPENDENCY STATUS

(Please type or print)

INDEX NO.	LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	LEVEL	DEPARTMENT	EXT.

I. PERSON TO BE NOTIFIED IN CASE OF ACCIDENT

NAME: .....
ADDRESS: .....
.....
.....
TEL. NO.: .....

II. **Has there been a change in your marital status since 1991?** YES [ ] NO [ ]
(Please read carefully paras. 6-11 of circular ST/IC/1992/12)

1. Spouse's gross occupational earnings in 1991: CURRENCY & AMOUNT: _____
Attach statement of earnings, e.g., W-2 form or income tax return.

2. Spouse's estimated gross occupational earnings for 1992: CURRENCY & AMOUNT: _____

III. **Has there been a change in the status of your dependent children since 1991?** YES [ ] NO [ ]
(Please read carefully paras. 12-19 of circular ST/IC/1992/12)

1. Have any of your dependent children reached age 18-21 since 1991? YES [ ] NO [ ]

2. Have any of your dependent children married? YES [ ] NO [ ]

3. Do you receive benefits in the form of government grants in respect of your dependent children? YES [ ] NO [ ]

If yes, indicate amount of grant per annum per child. CURRENCY & AMOUNT: _____
_____
_____

IV. **Has there been a change in the status of your secondary dependant?** YES [ ] NO [ ]
(Please read carefully paras. 20-21 of circular ST/IC/1992/12)

V. **Excluding rental subsidy from the Organization, are you provided with housing assistance by the Organization, a Government or a related institution?** YES [ ] NO [ ]
(Please read carefully paras. 22-23 of circular ST/IC/1992/12)

NOTE: ***IF YOU HAVE INDICATED A CHANGE IN ANY OF THE SECTIONS ABOVE, YOU WILL BE CONTACTED BY THE ALLOWANCES AND BENEFITS UNIT TO PROVIDE RELEVANT DOCUMENTATION.***

VI. I HEREBY CERTIFY that the information provided in this questionnaire is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature of staff member: _____ **Date:** _____

PLEASE DETACH AND RETURN TO YOUR EXECUTIVE OR ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER.